

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application based on the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Upon entry of this response, claims 1, 2, 7, 8, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17-19, 36, 38, and 40-45 will be pending. Claims 1 and 40 have been amended.

Claims Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 2, 7, 8, 11, 14, 17-19, 36, and 40-45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Franz et al. (DE 196 08 002) in view of Nelson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,325,795). Claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Franz in view of Nelson and further in view of Sewell et al. (U.S. Patent No. 682,118). Claim 15 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Franz in view of Nelson and further in view of Schultz et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,924,785). Claim 38 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Franz in view of Nelson and further in view of Nora et al. (EP 0 695 214). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

As discussed and agreed during a January 10, 2005 telephone conversation between the Examiner and the Applicant's representative, independent claims 1 and 40, as amended herein, are allowable over the prior art of record since no combination of the references of record teach or suggest the features of claims 1 and 40. Claims 2, 7, 8, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17-19, 36, 38, and 41-45 are believed allowable for at least the reasons presented above with respect to claims 1 and 40 by virtue of their dependence upon claims 1 and 40.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections.

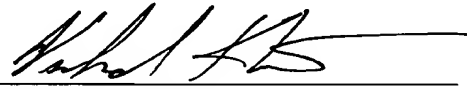
Conclusion

Therefore, all objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Should any issues remain unresolved, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney for Applicants at the telephone number indicated below in order to expeditiously resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: January 18, 2005